

*International Connections of Houston*  
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[www.internationalconnectionshouston.org](http://www.internationalconnectionshouston.org)

## INTERNATIONAL CONNECTIONS OF HOUSTON

### ANNUAL REPORT

September 2009 – August 2010



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## BACKGROUND

**International Connections of Houston (ICH)** is a 501(c) (3) non-profit tax-exempt which serves to empower, educate and assimilate into the local community, expatriates and Americans who have repatriated to the U.S. through informative programs, activities and discussion groups. Having lived abroad, members desire to connect with others who have had similar experiences.

ICH maintains a scholarship endowment program at the University of Houston - Clear Lake which awards a grant to an international student (when & whom at its discretion), namely, the Billie C Fowler ICH Scholarship Endowment. Today, no new recipients have been named since 2009 (see previous Annual Report for named recipients).

### Mission Statement

To connect, educate and empower members who have lived or are living an international experience.

### Our Vision

- To provide an educational and social forum for people in Houston who are interested in international and inter-cultural issues.
- To provide scholarship funds to student(s) who are pursuing an education with an international orientation.
  - To promote involvement in the local community and to foster global friendships.

### Community Development

International Connections of Houston impacts the community by:

- Working with area multi-national corporations to provide financial support for local charities and community service projects.
- Awarding ICH Scholarships to assist students interested in studying abroad or foreign students who wish to study in the United States.

### Focus on Family Concerns

International Connections of Houston seeks to impact the family through our focus on:

- Issues concerning mobile families in the 21st Century
  - Cultural sensitivities and language issues
  - Common reactions to relocating
- Development of career and voluntary opportunities

## FUNDING

ICH receives funding from membership dues (\$30 annually due January 1st), raffles conducted at monthly meetings, volunteer grant matching programs (such as ExxonMobil) and other social events.

## CONCLUSION

ICH continues to grow strongly and as of August 2010, membership stands at 251 members representing over 35 nations. Although membership grew to 299 members during the year (as of March 2010), summer sees a large flux of expatriates moving but we should hope to recover numbers from new members joining us after our August AGM.

## THANKS

**ICH continues to receive strong support from its sponsors, Interconex, Inc, UPS Store at Memorial Drive, Jackie Verity, Moria Holden, The Park at Voss Apartments and Options Resources. We thank these sponsors for their partnership and belief in our mission.**

# ACTIVITIES

ICH offers a host of activities year round in addition to their monthly meetings every 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday of the month.

## Special Activities:

**New2ICH Coffee** – an introduction to ICH only for new and potential members to meet the Board in a more personal setting

**International Luncheon** – a country-based luncheon to introduce members to the global cuisine and customs of other members

**Explore Houston** – tours (cultural, social etc.) to introduce and familiarize our members to the local environment and encourage them to be engaged in their surroundings

## New Activities this year

*Cycling, Badminton, Running, Tuesday Tennis* - All separate activities

*ICH Babes and Tots* - In recognition of the growing number of young mothers in our group

*Supper Club* – an activity to encourage spouses/partners to know each other

## Regular Activities:

*Book Club (2 groups)* : to discuss a book, usually fiction, chosen at our annual selection meeting in January.

*CCC - Casual Cooking Club* : Each month a member hosts and demonstrates her culinary skills in her home.

*French Conversation* : Members meet at an assigned place monthly to practice French.

*Friendly Bridge* : We meet to play some friendly bridge.

*The Lone Star Stitchers* : The Lone Star Stitchers meet for embroidery, quilting, cross-stitch and more.

*Mah Jong Club* : Open ‘the heavenly gates’ to learning a new game.

*Morning Handicrafts* : Morning handicrafts session.

*Spanish Conversation* : Conversational Spanish in a friendly and supportive environment.

*Walking groups* - There are 3 separate groups meeting weekly - Central at the Houston Garden Center in Hermann Park; West Side at the Terry Hershey Park in west Houston and Katy exercise out west in Katy

*Water Aerobics* : A seasonal activity in summer to keep our members fit

## MEMBER SERVICES

We act as facilitators for a number of activities that may be of interest to our members.

*Playgroup – TANZOT*: Tanzot Toddlers cater to Mums and Tots 0-4

*Teenage Touchstone* : This group helps organize activities for teenagers in town for vacations.

# PHILANTHROPY

Donations to charitable causes and the Billie C Fowler Scholarship Endowment Program at the University of Houston-Clear Lake.

**2004 - 2009**

**See Previous Annual Report (published on our website):**  
**[www.internationalconnectionshouston.org](http://www.internationalconnectionshouston.org)**

**2009 Donations (not covered in previous Annual report):**

- The Women's Home \$2,000
- Houston Audubon Society \$100
- Karenni Refugees donated item \$108.24

**2010 Donations**

- Haitian Relief Fund (organised by Haitian and Caribbean American Organization of Texas - "HACAOT") \$215
  - Texas Southern University Museum (International Tea) \$500
    - International Youth and Friendship Library \$500
    - Houston Rescue and Restore Coalition \$500

**Billie C Fowler Scholarship Endowment Program at the University of Houston-Clear Lake.**

- \$1,750 (April 2010) was made to the endowment program to fund 2 grants this year.

## ICH & University of Houston-Clear Lake Billie C. Fowler ICH Scholarship Endowment Program

For Fiscal year 2009 (Sept 1, 2008 – Aug 3, 2009), the Annual Endowment Report by the University of Houston-Clear Lake, was posted to ICH on Feb 10, 2010 as follows:

### INVESTMENT PERFORMANCE

Beginning Market value	\$26,117.00
Gifts Invested (the total amount of gifts received during fiscal year 2009)	3,000.00
Distributable Income (portion of investment income avail for expenditure according to purpose The endowment. Policy for determining the amount of D.I. is set by the UHS Board of Regents)	0.00
Changes in Market Value	<u>\$-5,049.00</u>
<b>ENDING MARKET VALUE</b> (represents both realized and unrealized gains on ICH gifts to the Endowment, a figure in constant change, tied to the daily fluctuation of the financial markets)	<b><u>\$24,068.00</u></b>
<b>EXPENDITURES</b> (including previous year's carryover, if any)	<b>\$ 540.00</b>

**Recipient of the Billie C Fowler International Connections of Houston Scholarship Endowment (2009):**

Jian W. Fu

For more information, website is [www.uhcl.edu/plannedgiving](http://www.uhcl.edu/plannedgiving).

## FINANCIALS

In accordance with our Standing Rules and Procedures, the Annual Budget is presented at the January Board meeting by the Treasurer.

## EVENTS OF NOTE

- Annual rates were raised for the first time ever, to \$30 to cover the costs of renting an additional room at Park at Voss for our increased attendance at the monthly meetings (average 80 members), increased costs for food and beverages (free at our meetings), coverage of insurance and other overheads.
- Joined the Texas Association for Non-Profit Organisations in February/March 2010 (\$50 annually).
- A Strategic Review Group was formed to review our organisation's past and current performance and to set goals and objectives for the future of ICH to enhance its role in the community, local and expatriate. Implementation of the SRG Committee's recommendations was presented to the Board and members of ICH and we hope to begin implementing some of these changes in September under the direction of the Board of Directors for 2009-2010. One such example will be a new design for ICH brochures and displays (although the logo will be retained). another will be setting up a Philanthropy Committee and a committee for newcomers.
- A presentation was made to Conoco-Philips at a conference for their incoming expatriates. Jackie Verity and Kathleen Barndt (past presidents), Louise Greeley-Copley (ICH member and FAWCO president), Apple Gidley (V-P Newsletter) and Mun Molloy (current president) introduced ICH and its merits to their employees. We hope to be able to organise a group to reach out to international companies with our message.

## FUTURE

**ICH continues to be a unique and necessary organisation in Houston, a strategic center for the oil and gas industry. In addition, the wealth of consulates, foreign language schools and world-class medical facilities continue to bring many expatriates and returning Americans into Houston. Although ICH serves a mainly social role within the expatriate community, we strongly encourage our members' volunteerism and philanthropy within the local community.**

**With new goals set for the next few years, for example, a Philanthropy Committee, we hope to increase the visibility of our unique organisation in Houston.**

**Mun Molloy  
President (2009-2010)**